

Affordable housing, long overlooked, getting federal boost

By MICHAEL CASEY
Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — After her home flooded five times in the past year, Tilicia Owens was on edge with every impending storm and ready to leave her Detroit neighborhood behind.

But then the 40-year-old quality engineer heard the city had a program that could prevent heavy rains from inundating her basement and damaging her furniture, photos and exercise equipment. The city is tapping \$2.5 million in federal stimulus money as part of a \$15 million effort to provide pumps and other equipment to help prevent flooding in 11 neighborhoods.

"That would mean the world to me," said Owens, who has applied to the city's Basement Backup Protection Program, which would provide homeowners a pump to remove floodwaters or a valve outside the home to prevent water from entering.

"I have invested so much into my home," she added.



Supporters of the homeless community, as well as unhoused individuals themselves, stand with signs in reaction to a counter protest by Idaho Liberty Dogs on Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022, outside the former Ada County Courthouse building in downtown Boise, Idaho.

Associated Press

Continued on next page

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT 7 DAYS A WEEK

SUNDAY:	MONDAY:	TUESDAY:	WEDNESDAY:	THURSDAY:	FRIDAY:	SATURDAY:
TICO KOCK STEEL DRUM 4 - 6pm	ANGELA FLORES VIOLINIST 6:30 - 8:30pm	JEAN PAUL SAXOPHONIST 6:30 - 8:30pm	CARLOS ORLATE SINGER 6:30 - 8:30pm	MARRYBELL MADURO SINGER 6:30 - 8:30pm	RICKY THOMAS GUITAR 7 - 9pm	ANGELA FLORES VIOLINIST 6:30 - 8:30pm

MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 - 8:30pm

Happy Hour
12-1 / 4-6 / 9-10

PREMIUM
BRANDS

KARAOKE
HAPPY HOUR
9:00 - 11:00pm

WATER'S EDGE
RESTAURANT & BAR

Tel +297 583 8000 Ext. 8106 | Reservations at wateredge-aruba.com | Elegant dining, spectacular ocean views enjoyed al fresco or in air conditioned comfort | Located at Costa Linda Beach Resort

Fit2fly COVID-19
Testing Center

NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED!

NAAT (Abott ID):
Result in 30 minutes!

PCR / Antigen Test
SAME DAY RESULT!

LABORATORIO DI SERVIZIO

MedCare Clinic
URGENT CARE

Tel: (+297) 280-0630
info@medcare.aw / www.medcare.aw

Locations: **The Cove Mall** (8:00 AM - 6:00 PM) **Medcare near Courtyard by Marriott** (8:00 AM - 2:00 PM)

Continued from Front

"I want to protect that and I want to protect my investment. It would take away all my anxiety."

Detroit has turned to the \$350 billion in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to partly finance the project. Part of the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan approved last year, the money is meant to help communities recover from the pandemic and can be used for everything from job creation to child care to housing.

More than 60 states, counties and cities, including Detroit, are tapping the funds for housing programs. With President Joe Biden's Build Back Better bill floundering and federal Emergency Rental Assistance running out in some places, the funds have become a critical source of money to address a shortage of affordable housing and a growing homelessness crisis. Prioritizing housing is also a reminder that the long-running shortage of affordable housing, especially in communities of color, has worsened during the pandemic, a time when a looming eviction crisis and rising housing prices threatened millions of families.

"There was already growing awareness before the pandemic in states and cities around the country that affordable housing problems that always existed were reaching an all time level and just had to be addressed," said Stockton Williams, the executive director of the National Council of State Housing Agencies. "The pandemic has shown a brighter light on that, especially as they relate to the most vulnerable renters and homeowners."

For many communities, the amount of money available in the state and local fiscal recovery funds is also historic and more than many have spent on housing in a year or even a decade.

"This is certainly transformational funding," Jacqueline Edwards, the director of the Maricopa County Human Services Department in Arizona, said of the nearly \$85 million it has to spend on everything from new hous-



Tilicia Owens and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Regan, center, listen to Detroit Water and Sewerage Department director Gary Brown in her basement Friday, Feb. 18, 2022, in Detroit.

Associated Press

ing to additional shelter beds to helping homeowners repair their air conditioning and stay in their homes when temperatures heat up. Typically, the county has a few million dollars to spend each year on these services.

"We'll be able to make significant changes, not just that will impact today, but will impact lives for years to come," she added.

But advocates say it still is only a start and significant federal investment — much of it in the Build Back Better bill, passed by the House but currently held up in the Senate — is necessary to fix the problem.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 1 in 4 families eligible for federal rental assistance received it before the pandemic. The National Low Income Housing Coalition estimates that \$86 billion annually is needed over the next decade for universal housing vouchers and housing funds. Another \$70 billion is needed for public housing repairs.

So far, more than \$11 billion from the state and local fiscal recovery funds have been committed to housing-related programs, according to the Center, which is tracking spending. States in the West, Midwest and East have already

made significant commitments, according to a February report from the National Low Income Housing Coalition. Southern states, long known for having among the weakest tenant protections, have committed very little.

Among the biggest areas of investment is a promise to build more affordable housing.

Massachusetts has allotted nearly \$600 million to affordable housing, including \$150 million for new housing and \$150 million to maintain public housing. Colorado lawmakers have proposed spending \$400 million and Washington, D.C., has set aside \$323 million, including \$17 million for community groups to provide housing for victims of domestic violence. Clark County, Nevada, home to Las Vegas, whose tourist economy was hammered by the pandemic, plans to spend more than a third of its funds, or \$157 million, on housing.

Others states, led by Washington, Oregon and New Jersey, are working to shore up their eviction protections — something the U.S. Treasury Department has encouraged.

Washington is spending \$403 million to bolster its emergency rental assistance program and \$174

million for homeowner assistance. New York City plans to spend nearly \$329 million to increase access to rental assistance vouchers. New Jersey is spending \$750 million in rental and utility assistance and creating a statewide eviction prevention program.

"A lot of people who never thought they would be housing unstable ... are in this situation. And so it is scary and people don't know quite where to turn," said Janel Winter, the director of New Jersey's Division of Housing and Community Resources.

"This provides them with that assistance. ... So everybody who is in that court understands their rights, understands their responsibilities, is able to take advantage of whatever protections are there for them."

Several communities are using the funds to help the homeless. North Carolina has set aside \$15 million to rapidly rehouse people at risk of homelessness because of the pandemic. Clark County, Washington, is spending \$4.4 million to fund homeless outreach teams while Burlington, Vermont, plans to use \$1.4 million on 30 shelter pods for people to sleep in and store their belongings.

Austin, Texas, which has hundreds of homeless en-

campments and upwards of 2,500 people sleeping on the street most nights, is putting more than \$106 million towards homelessness. That is in addition to the \$110 million that Travis County, home to Austin, is putting towards the problem.

The funds will help move the homeless into temporary housing and eventually into permanent units that offer services like counseling and rental assistance. There is also funding for 1,300 new housing units set aside for the homeless and the city has acquired several hotels with the money. "We are focused on building a system that doesn't just move people off the streets into shelters but is focused on resolving their housing crisis," said Dianna Grey, the city's homeless strategy officer.

Several cities are using the funds to save homes battered by years of neglect and to ensure impoverished families can remain housed. Milwaukee wants to spend \$15 million to rehabilitate up to 150 city-owned, foreclosed houses. Detroit has set aside more than \$83 million for housing-related spending, including \$27.5 million to repair 1,000 roofs — tripling the amount it spends on its low-income home-repair program. It's also spending \$14.2 million to renovate vacant homes and \$6.4 million to set up an online system allowing residents to find and apply for low-income housing.

Deputy Mayor Conrad Mallett said the spending priorities are aimed at preventing further declines in the city's population, which has dropped dramatically since the 1950s.

"If we are going to maintain population and attract new people to the city, it is going to be because of the housing opportunities that we can provide," he said, adding that the city also has to help those who have remained in Detroit.

"We are going to deliver service to the people who stayed," he said. "We are not simply going to say to the people who endured, that you have no place. We want you to stay. We want you to succeed." □

Report: Justice Thomas' wife urged overturning 2020 election

WASHINGTON (AP) — Virginia Thomas, wife of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, sent weeks of text messages imploring White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows to act to overturn the 2020 presidential election — furthering then-President Donald Trump's lies that the free and fair vote was marred by nonexistent fraud, according to copies of the messages obtained by The Washington Post and CBS News.

The 29 messages the pair exchanged came in the weeks after the vote in November 2020, when Trump and his top allies were still saying they planned to go to the Supreme Court to have its results voided.

The Post reported that on Nov. 10, three days after the election and after The Associated Press and other news outlets declared Democrat Joe Biden the winner, Virginia Thomas, a conservative activist, texted to Meadows: "Help This Great President stand firm, Mark!!! ... You are the leader, with him, who is standing for America's constitutional governance at the precipice. The majority knows Biden and the Left is attempting the greatest Heist of our History."

Copies of the texts — 21 sent by her, eight sent in reply by Meadows — were



Virginia Thomas, wife of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, arrives to watch Amy Coney Barrett take the Constitutional Oath on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, Oct. 26, 2020, after Barrett was confirmed by the Senate earlier in the evening.

Associated Press

provided to the House select committee investigating the deadly insurrection that saw a mob of mostly Trump supporters overrun the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. The AP attempted to get the same information from the committee, but it declined to comment.

The texts do not directly reference Thomas' husband or the Supreme Court. But she has previously admitted to attending the Trump's "Stop the Steal" rally that preceded the Capitol riot. Virginia Thomas also has previously

denied conflicts of interest between her activism and her husband's place on the high court.

Still, the messages show she was urging the top levels of the Trump administration to try to throw out the 2020 election results, and even offering coaching to Meadows on how best to do so. Thomas urged lawyer Sidney Powell, who promoted false claims about the election, to be "the lead and the face" of the Trump legal team. Meadows' attorney,

George Terwilliger III, told the Post and CBS that neither he nor Meadows would comment on individual texts, adding, "nothing about the text messages presents any legal issues."

Justice Thomas, 73, has been hospitalized for treatment from an infection. He and his wife did not respond to the outlets' request for comment.

In February 2021, the Supreme Court rejected challenges to the election. Justice Thomas dissented, calling the ruling not to

hear arguments in the case "befuddling" and "inexplicable."

In a Nov. 5 message to Meadows, Virginia Thomas quoted material that had appeared on right-wing fringe websites: "Biden crime family & ballot fraud co-conspirators (elected officials, bureaucrats, social media censorship mongers, fake stream media reporters, etc) are being arrested & detained for ballot fraud right now & over coming days, & will be living in barges off GITMO to face military tribunals for sedition."

In a subsequent text the next day, Thomas wrote to Meadows, "Do not concede."

The messages also suggest that Meadows was willing to continue pursuing ways to overturn the election. He replied to one message from Thomas: "I will stand firm. We will fight until there is no fight left. Our country is too precious to give up on. Thanks for all you do."

The texts between Thomas and Meadows stop after November 24, 2020. But the committee received another message sent on Jan. 10, 2021, four days after the mob attack on the Capitol, according to the Post and CBS. "We are living through what feels like the end of America," Thomas wrote to Meadows in it. □

High court gives Biden win for now in Navy vaccine case

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court is giving the Navy a freer hand determining what job assignments it gives to 35 sailors who sued after refusing on religious grounds to comply with an order to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

The high court in a brief order Friday sided with the Biden administration and said that while the lawsuit plays out, the Navy may consider the sailors' vaccination status in making deployment, assignment and other operational decisions. The group that sued includes mostly Navy SEALs. Justice Brett Kavanaugh wrote that there was a "simple overarching rea-

son" that he agreed with the court's decision. The Constitution makes the president, "not any federal judge," the commander in chief of the armed forces, he wrote, noting that courts have been traditionally "reluctant to intrude upon the authority of the Executive in military and national security affairs."

Three conservative justices — Clarence Thomas, Samuel Alito and Neil Gorsuch — noted that they disagreed with their colleagues' decision and would have sided with the group of SEALs.

Alito wrote that his colleagues were "rubber-stamping the Government's request." "These in-

dividuals appear to have been treated shabbily by the Navy, and the Court brushes all that aside," Alito wrote.

A federal judge in Texas in January issued a preliminary injunction barring the Navy from acting against the sailors. The Biden administration said it was not asking the Supreme Court to block parts of the lower court order barring the sailors from being disciplined or discharged but only the requirement that their assignments be made without considering their vaccination status. That requirement posed "intolerable risks to safety and mission success," the administration



Visitors walk outside the Supreme Court building on Capitol Hill in Washington, Feb. 21, 2022.

Associated Press

had argued.

"Navy personnel routinely operate for extended periods of time in confined spaces that are ripe breed-

ing grounds for respiratory illnesses, where mitigation measures such as distancing are impractical or impossible. □

Teen falls to death from Florida amusement park ride

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — A 14-year-old boy fell to his death late at night from a free-fall amusement park ride that is taller than the Statue of Liberty along a busy street in the heart of Orlando's tourist district. Sheriff's officials and emergency crews responded to a call late Thursday at the Orlando Free Fall ride, which opened late last year at Icon Park on the city's International Drive. The teen was identified Friday as Tyre Sampson, who was visiting central Florida from Missouri with a friend's family. Detectives investigating the death will look into whether it was intentional or accidental, said Orange County Sheriff John Mina.

"It appears to be just a terrible tragedy," Mina said. "We will see moving forward what that results in." Sampson was taken to a hospital, where he died, sheriff's officials said. No additional details about the teen or the incident were immediately released. A video aired by NBC's "Today" show Friday morning appears to show passengers on the ride discussing issues with a seat restraint



ICON Park attractions, The Wheel, left, Orlando SlingShot, middle, and Orlando FreeFall, right, are shown in Orlando, Fla., on Thursday, March 24, 2022.

Associated Press

Thursday night. The ride then began its trek up the tower before someone is later seen falling from the ride.

"We are absolutely saddened and devastated by what happened, and our hearts go out this young man's family," John Stine, sales director with the Sling-shot Group which owns the ride, told The Associated Press on Friday morning. The Free Fall ride and an adjacent ride, the Sling

Shot, have been closed indefinitely, Stine said. His company operates the two rides at Icon Park.

"We are cooperating with all other investigations at this time to get to the bottom of what happened," Stine said. Stine said there had been no issues reported previously with the Free Fall ride, which opened last December. Employees and witnesses interviewed by detectives

reported no problems beforehand.

"Everything seemed to be OK and normal," Mina said. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, which oversees amusement ride inspections with the exception of the state's largest theme parks, has launched an investigation and inspectors were at the site Friday, spokesperson Caroline Stonecipher said in an email. According to a report from

the state agency, the ride had its initial permit inspection on Dec. 20, 2021, and no problems were found. The next semi-annual inspection for the ride wasn't due for several more months.

"The ride will be closed for the foreseeable future and will not re-open until all questions are answered as part of the ongoing FDACS investigation," the report said.

The ride has over-the-shoulder restraint harnesses, with two hand grips at the chest level, that riders pull down and then they are released automatically at the end of the ride. An inspector on Friday could be seen sitting in a ride seat with the security harness over his shoulders as another inspector took measurements.

The ride stands 430-feet (131-meters) tall, and is billed as the world's tallest free-standing drop tower, according to the park's website.

The ride holds 30 passengers as it rises in the air, rotates around the tower and then tilts to face the ground before free falling at more than 75 mph (120 kph), the website said.

New Orleans school board reverses little known ban on jazz



Jazz trumpeter Wynton Marsalis performs for school children during a program "Cookin' with Jazz" with celebrity chef Emeril Lagasse in New Orleans, Aug. 28, 2006.

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — With its president saying it had racist origins, the New Orleans school board has unanimously reversed a little known but century-old ban on jazz in schools in a city which played a huge role in developing jazz and

where it is still played nightly at various venues.

"I'm very glad that we can rescind this policy. I want to acknowledge it. It was rooted in racism," Orleans Parish School Board President Olin Parker said during the meeting Thursday

night. "And I also want to acknowledge the tremendous contributions of our students and especially of our band directors, whose legacy continues from 1922 through present day."

The board's resolution said it wanted "to correct the previous action of the School Board and to encourage jazz music and jazz dance in schools."

Board minutes from March 24, 1922, said "it was decided that jazz music and jazz dancing would be abolished in the public schools." One member — who walked out on a special meeting called at the end of the session because reporters were not allowed to cover it — abstained from voting on jazz.

Officials told The Times Picayune / The New Orleans Advocate that the 1922

board members were trying to distance students from a genre with African American origins.

A copy of a news clipping from 1922, posted on the newspaper's website, did not mention race. It quoted the resolution's sponsor, "Mrs. A. Baumgartner," as saying she had seen "a lot of rough dancing" at after-school events. "This cheek-to-cheek dancing is terrible," she said.

Ken Ducote, executive director of the Greater New Orleans Collaborative of Charter Schools, brought the policy to the board's attention after reading about it in Al Kennedy's book "Chord Changes on the Chalkboard: How Public School Teachers Shaped Jazz and the Music of New Orleans."

"It was just one of those

things that was buried in the books," board member Carlos Zervigon said Friday. "Obviously it was ridiculous and never really applied. But what an opportunity to be able to go back and reverse it on the 100th anniversary of its passage and acknowledge what our schools played in the formation and development of music in our classrooms." The earlier board's vote on March 24, 1922, was passed without "prior policy development, analysis, or debate," and the proposal had not been on the agenda, the current board noted.

"We're glad that the policy was ignored by our schools, because our schools played a major role in the development of jazz," said member Katherine Baudouin.

U.S., E.U. sign data transfer deal to ease privacy concerns

By **KELVIN CHAN and CHRIS MEGIERIAN**

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union and United States made a breakthrough in their yearslong battle over the privacy of data that flows across the Atlantic with a preliminary agreement Friday that paves the way for Europeans' personal information to be stored in the U.S.

President Joe Biden and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced the deal during Biden's stop in Brussels while on a European tour amid Russia's war in Ukraine.

Business groups hailed the announcement, saying it will provide relief to thousands of companies, including tech giants like Google and Facebook, that faced uncertainty over their ability to send data between the U.S. and Europe, which has much stricter regulations on data privacy. Data may be related to employees or customers and users, and companies use it for all types of online advertising, purchases and communications.

The agreement came hours after EU officials agreed on sweeping new digital rules to rein in the power of big tech companies such as Facebook and Google.



President Joe Biden listens as European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen speaks about the Russian invasion of Ukraine, at the U.S. Mission in Brussels, Friday, March 25, 2022, in Brussels.
Associated Press

"Today we've agreed to unprecedented protections for data privacy and security for our citizens," Biden said. "This new arrangement will enhance the Privacy Shield framework, promote growth and innovation in Europe and the United States, and help companies — both small and large — compete in the digital economy."

Von der Leyen said the agreement "will enable predictable and trustworthy data flows between the EU and the U.S., safeguard-

ing privacy and civil liberties."

The data includes "any information that we voluntarily provide or generate when using services and products online," said Alexandre Roure, an official with the tech trade group CCIA. That includes names, ID numbers and geolocation data, online identifiers like IP addresses and emails, and other information that tech companies use to target ads.

The deal stems from a complaint filed a decade ago

by Austrian lawyer and privacy activist Max Schrems, who was concerned about how Facebook handled his data in light of revelations about U.S. government cybersnooping from former U.S. National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden.

Along the way, a ruling by the EU's top court struck down the Privacy Shield agreement covering transatlantic data transfers because it fell afoul of stringent data privacy standards in the 27-nation bloc.

Companies were forced to rely on stock legal contracts to continue the transfers, while some scrambled to localize their data or suspend transfers.

In a joint statement, the U.S. and EU said the agreement addresses concerns raised by the court, with the U.S. bringing in reforms to beef up privacy and civil liberties protections "applicable to signals intelligence activities," referring to the collection of emails, text messages and other electronic communications by intelligence agencies.

The U.S. will put in place "new safeguards to ensure signals surveillance activities are necessary and proportionate in the pursuit of defined national security objectives," the statement said.

The dispute had raised the prospect that Facebook would have to revamp its data centers to ensure European data is kept out of the U.S.

The new agreement "will help keep people connected and services running," Facebook head of global affairs Nick Clegg tweeted. "It will provide invaluable certainty for American & European companies of all sizes, including Meta, who rely on transferring data quickly and safely." □

Japan OKs bigger budget to host U.S. forces, step up alliance

By **MARI YAMAGUCHI**
Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's parliament on Friday approved a new agreement with the United States, endorsing Japanese government spending exceeding 1 trillion yen (\$8 billion) for hosting U.S. troops as the two sides strengthen their military alliance in the face of growing threat from China and North Korea in the region.

The 1.05 trillion yen (\$8.6 billion) host nation support budget covers the purchase of advanced arsenals used in their joint military exercises, as well as utilities and facilities used by the U.S. troops and their

Japanese employees working on American bases in the country through March 2027.

The upcoming five-year budget includes a new funding category of up to 20 billion yen (\$164 million) for the purchase of advanced virtual combat training systems for joint exercises between the two forces.

The roughly 200 billion yen (\$1.6 billion) for the first year is included in the fiscal 2022 national defense budget — a record 5.4 trillion yen (\$44 billion) — beginning in April.

Japan's government now describes the host-nation support budget as neces-

sary for strengthening the alliance, rather than for "kindness" as it used to be considered.

Japan has been expanding its defense budget and capability for about a decade and is now revising its key national security strategy in the face of threats from China, North Korea and now Russia.

Japan is especially concerned about Chinese military activity in waters in the East China Sea surrounding the Japanese-controlled Senkaku islands, which Beijing also claims and calls Diaoyu.

Japan has significantly expanded its joint drills with the United States as well



An MV-22 Osprey takes off as Japan Ground Self-Defense Force guards the landing zone during a joint military drill with U.S. Marines in Gotemba, southwest of Tokyo, Tuesday, March 15, 2022.
Associated Press

as other partners including Australia, India, France, Britain and Germany that share concern about Chi-

na's push for its territorial claims in the region, which has some of the world's busiest sea lanes. □

Document indicates China could boost military in Solomons

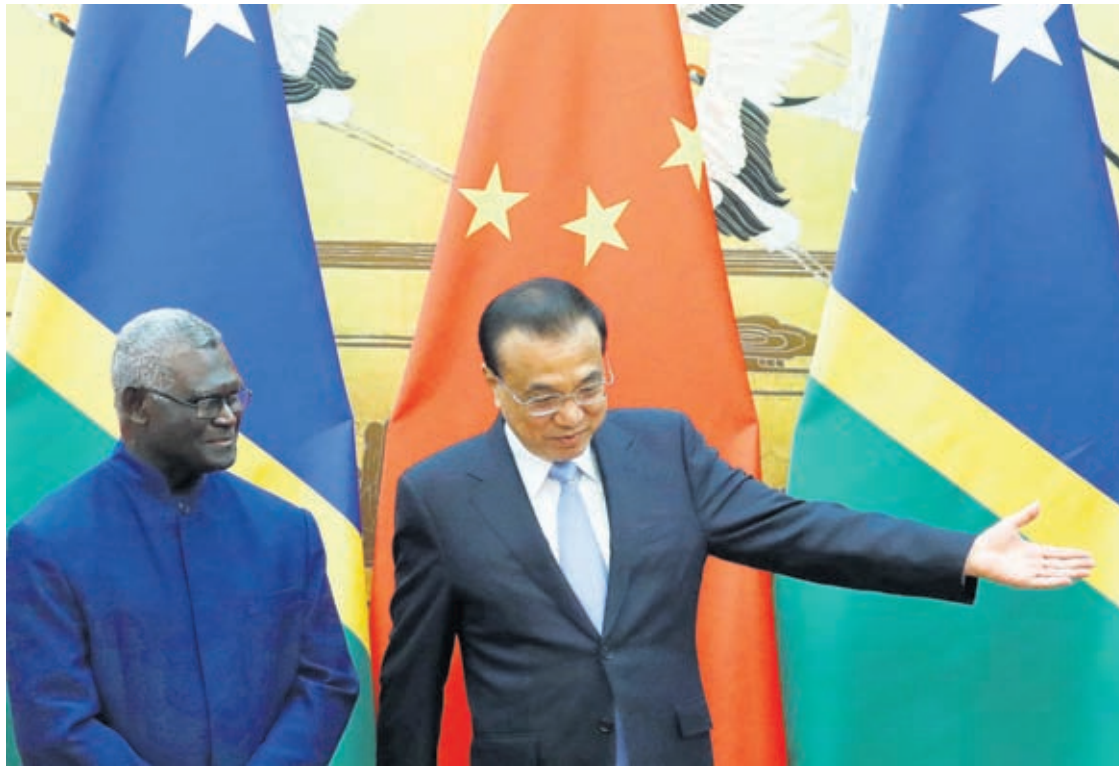
By **NICK PERRY**

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — A leaked document indicates that China could boost its military presence in the Solomon Islands — including with ship visits — in a development that is raising alarm in nearby Australia and beyond.

The Solomon Islands revealed on Thursday it had signed a policing cooperation agreement with China. But more concerning to Australia was the draft text of a broader security arrangement that was leaked online.

Under the terms of the draft agreement, China could send police, military personnel, and other armed forces to the Solomons "to assist in maintaining social order" and for a variety of other reasons. It could also send ships to the islands for stopovers and to replenish supplies.

The draft agreement stipulates that China would need to sign off on any information that's released about joint security arrangements, including at media briefings. Without directly addressing the content of the draft agreement, Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade issued a statement saying "We would be concerned by any actions that destabilize the security of our region."



Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare, left, and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang attend a signing ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, on Oct. 9, 2019.

Associated Press

The department said that after riots last year in the Solomon Islands' capital, Honiara, Australia and its neighbors had been able to send security assistance "without the need for external support."

"Pacific Island nations have the right to make sovereign decisions," the department said. "Australia's cooperation with our Pacific family is focused on the economic prosperity, security and development of our region."

New Zealand said it planned to raise its concerns about the document

with both the Solomon Islands and China.

"If genuine, this agreement would be very concerning," Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta said. "Such agreements will always be the right of any sovereign country to enter into; however, developments within this purported agreement could destabilize the current institutions and arrangements that have long underpinned the Pacific region's security."

Questioned about the agreement, China's Foreign Ministry said Beijing and

the Solomons "conducted normal law enforcement and security cooperation on the basis of equal treatment and win-win cooperation."

"This is in line with the international law and international practice, conducive to maintaining social order in the Solomon Islands and promoting peace and stability in the region, and helpful to enhance common interests of China and the Solomon Islands, as well as all countries in the region," ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin told re-

porters at a daily briefing on Friday.

Wang referenced China's previous support for the Solomons in handling riots and "maintaining stability," but did not cite the agreement directly.

Referring to Australia, he said China hoped "the relevant party will see this objectively and calmly, and refrain from overinterpreting it."

"It is irresponsible and unhelpful for regional stability and development that the individual Australian official hyped the fallacy of China's so-called coercion and deliberately created tensions," Wang said.

Anna Powles, a senior lecturer in international security at New Zealand's Massey University, said Australia, New Zealand and the U.S. would all be "very concerned" about the draft agreement, which was ambitious on China's part.

Powles said it would be interesting to know what kind of goods China might want to send to the Solomons to service its ships, and whether there was the potential for mission creep in the future, like China developing a naval base.

She said she was concerned China was trying to direct the political narrative by controlling what information could be publicly released. □

West African leaders hold summit after Mali sanctions



ECOWAS heads of states and other representative pose for a family photo during the fifth extraordinary summit in Accra, Ghana, Friday March 25, 2022.

Associated Press

By **BABA AHMED**
Associated Press

BAMAKO, Mali (AP) — West African leaders on Friday

held another summit on Mali after imposing regional sanctions in January on the country after its military leaders said they would stay in power for four more years instead of holding an election in February.

The regional economic bloc known as ECOWAS invited the junta leader and transitional president of Mali, Col. Assimi Goita, to attend in person, but his office said he wouldn't go in person but may attend virtually.

It's likely that the bloc will revisit the January sanctions that suspended most commerce and financial

aid to the country and included land and air border closures with other countries belonging to ECOWAS. The African Economic and Monetary Union Court of Justice on Thursday ordered the suspension of those sanctions. Mali's leaders have been requesting a lifting of the sanctions since they were imposed and last month filed a legal complaint saying they would severely affect Malians.

It is unclear if the regional body meeting in Ghana's capital, Accra, on Friday will follow the recommendation of the court.

After overthrowing Mali's

democratically elected president in August 2020, coup leader Goita had promised to swiftly return the country to democratic rule. Doubts deepened about his intentions, though, after he effectively launched a second coup nine months later, forcing out the chosen transitional civilian leaders and becoming president himself.

The junta led by Goita, which had initially agreed to hold a new election in February, said in January that new elections would instead be held in 2026, giving Goita four more years in power. □

Mexican leader brushes off U.S. allegations of Russia spies

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador on Friday brushed off comments by a senior U.S. military official who said there are more Russian spies in Mexico than anywhere else in the world.

That was an apparent reference to Russia's huge embassy in Mexico City, which has a decades-old reputation for being an espionage hub.

Responding to a question, López Obrador said Mexico was nobody's colony and didn't send spies abroad. But those were two things that Gen. Glen VanHerck, head of U.S. Northern Command, had not mentioned. VanHerck said Thursday before the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee that "the largest portion of the GRU members is in Mexico right now. Those are Russian intelligence personnel."

The GRU is Russia's main foreign military intelligence agency.

"Mexico is a free country, independent and sovereign, we are not a colony of Russia, China or the United States," López Obrador said. "We don't go to Moscow to spy on anybody, nor do we go to Beijing to spy on what they are doing. We don't go to Washington, not even to Los Angeles. We don't get in-



Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador speaks during his daily morning press conference before officially inaugurating the Felipe Angeles International Airport (AIFA) north of Mexico City, Monday, March 21, 2022.

Associated Press

volved in that," he said.

Despite Mexico's enormous commercial ties to the United States, the country has traditionally tried to preserve a measure of independence and non-alignment in foreign policy, and many Mexicans have long seen Russia and Cuba as counterbalances to U.S. dominance.

For example, members of Mexico's Congress drew a rebuke from U.S. Ambassador Ken Salazar this week when they formed a Mexico-Russia "friendship com-

mittee." The idea of Mexico drawing closer to Russia or splitting with the United States on the issue is something "that can never happen," Salazar said.

A half dozen legislators from López Obrador's Morena party joined almost 20 other allied Congress members Wednesday in creating the committee almost a month after Russian troops invaded Ukraine.

The group held a meeting in the Congress building with Russian Ambassador Viktor Koronelli, who told

them, "For us this is a sign of support, of friendship, of solidarity in these complicated times in which my country is not just facing a special military operation in Ukraine, but a tremendous media war."

Morena Congressman Armando Contreras Castillo said: "We are always ready to do everything we can to increase the friendship, relations and cooperation between Mexico and Russia in every aspect of the world and life."

Mexico has refused to send

any aid to Ukraine or impose sanctions on Russia, but did cosponsor a U.N. resolution condemning the invasion. The huge mansion that holds the Russian Embassy in Mexico City is far out of scale to the very limited trade, tourism and commercial ties between the two countries and has long been thought to be a hub for spies. Lee Harvey Oswald, the gunman in the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy, made never fully explained visits to the Soviet and Cuban embassies in Mexico City before the killing.

More recently, U.S. security archives show several cases in which people convicted of selling sensitive U.S. information to the Soviets in the 1960s and 70s met with handlers or contacts in Mexico City.

And in February, a prominent Mexican scientist who led a double life with two families on separate continents pleaded guilty to a charge of being coopted by Russian agents into surveilling a U.S. government informant residing in Miami. Hector Cabrera Fuentes was arrested in 2020 at Miami International Airport as he and his Mexican wife -- the other is from Russia -- were looking to return to their home in Mexico City. □

Atom-smashing CERN lab ratchets up measures against Russia

GENEVA (AP) — The sprawling European science lab that houses the world's largest atom smasher is taking new steps that will further limit its cooperation with Russian research institutes in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The CERN Council, the governing body of the Geneva-based lab with 23 member states, announced Friday that its scientists will suspend participation in all scientific committees in Russia and neighboring Belarus, a Russian ally that facilitated the Feb. 24 invasion.

CERN, the historic acronym for what is now the European Organization for Nuclear Research, had

grappled with its response to the invasion because nearly 7% of its 18,000-odd researchers from around the world are linked to Russian institutions. On March 8, the council suspended new collaborations with Russia and stripped Russia of its observer status at the organization.

The issue of whether to further sanction Russia became pressing because the Large Hadron Collider, the world's largest and most powerful particle accelerator, is set to start its third-ever run next month.

The machine propels particles through an underground, 27-kilometer (17-mile) ring of superconduct-

ing magnets in and around Geneva, generating science that can help elucidate mysteries like dark matter or the standard model of particle physics. Russian scientists have been involved in planning multiple experiments.

Under the new measures approved Friday, CERN will suspend all joint events with Russian institutes and pause considering any new candidates from Russia and Belarus to join the organization's staff.

The council also announced that it will suspend all collaboration with the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, an international grouping of 19 member



A technician works in the LHC (Large Hadron Collider) tunnel of the European Organization for Nuclear Research, CERN, during a press visit in Meyrin, near Geneva, Switzerland, Tuesday, Feb. 16, 2016.

Associated Press

nations based in Dubna, Russia. More than half of the members are former Soviet republics, includ-

ing Ukraine, but they also include Cuba, the Czech Republic, Poland, North Korea, and Vietnam. □

BINGO IS BACK EVERY THURSDAY, SATURDAY & SUNDAY!

SUPER
BINGO
SATURDAY!
SUNDAY FUNDAY
BINGO

Super 4-Card BINGO
starting at 1pm!
\$7 for 4-Card BINGO | 8 Games to Play
\$1,500 in Cash Prizes
SPECIAL PROGRESSIVE GAME
Jackpot within 50 Calls | 51 Calls or more \$111
Additional \$500 Cash Prize in our
Monthly Early Bird Drawing when you
purchase your card before noon!

THE SHOPS AT ALHAMBRA CASINO

Offering a wide variety of Retail & Dining Outlets,
Salon & Spa Services, Souvenirs and more.

Dunkin Donuts | Baskin Robbins | Fusion Piano & Wine Bar
Hungry Piranha | Twist of Flavors | Juan Valdez Café
The Brownstone Ribs & Seafood
Coming Soon: Auntie Anne's Pretzels

Alhambra
CASINO AND SHOPS

Open daily 10am to 3am | J.E. Irausquin Blvd #47 | 583.5000 | casinoalhambra.com

Play Responsibly. Visit www.gamblersanonymous.org if you or someone you know has a gambling problem.



PALM BEACH - Don't spend a single moment of your long awaited holiday in Aruba thinking about your return testing. The Covid Test Center Aruba located at the Paseo Herencia Mall is your travel ally. Just sit back and relax knowing that, when the time comes, their professional staff will make this process a breeze for you. No need to make an appointment or dread the nasal swab; you'll be done with it in a matter of minutes and back to fun stuff.

Some regions require proof or certification of negative COVID-19 status before allowing people into or out of the country. With rules and guidelines varying greatly from country to country,

the safest approach is to have recent proof you are COVID-19 negative before you get to the airport. Covid Test Center @ Paseo provides both PCR and Antigen type testing with results within hours; and both are accepted by the CDC. Covid Test Center @ Paseo is conveniently located at the Paseo Herencia Mall in the heart of the Palm Beach Strip and right across from the Playa Linda and Holiday Inn hotels; only two doors from T.G.I. Friday's. We are open seven days a week, between 9 am and 9 pm. This gives you the choice to walk in when it better suits you. It can be at the start or at the end of your day. No appointment needed here. The friendly technicians at

Covid Test Center at Paseo has the best experience!

Covid Test Center @ Paseo will take your information as we are aware it is imperative that this shows accurately on the results. For a seamless process, please verify that you have provided the correct email to deliver the certificate. Said certificate can be printed at our offices should you wish to do so.

We understand that nobody enjoys doing a nasal swab. That is why we take pride in our reputation of being the gentlest swabbers on the island. First, we will not rush you just to go to the next in line. Through clear given instructions we want you to feel comfortable. When you are ready, we will promptly but tenderly take a proper sample. Many elsewhere traumatized people praise the difference it makes to test



with us.

Forget about counting

hours before your flight, our turnaround is fast! For travel to the US, for example, a day before will suffice. A great game plan is to test first, then head out for an evening of dining, shopping and entertainment at the Paseo Herencia Mall, home of the water and lights show in the evenings. By the time you are back at the hotel, your results will be ready in your inbox.

A PCR test costs \$75 and results are ready the next day, while Antigen test costs \$35 with same day results. If you are staying at an off-high-rise area property, you can benefit from the free parking our customers receive at the mall lot.).

For more information follow us on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. □



BINGO IS BACK EVERY THURSDAY, SATURDAY & SUNDAY!

**Free Shirt
Sunday!**

Get a **FREE** Alhambra
T-Shirt when you earn
250 Slot Points on Sunday with
your **Players' Club card!**

**THE SHOPS
AT ALHAMBRA CASINO**

Offering a wide variety of Retail & Dining Outlets,
Salon & Spa Services, Souvenirs and more.

Dunkin Donuts | Baskin Robbins | Fusion Piano & Wine Bar
Hungry Piranha | Twist of Flavors | Juan Valdez Café

The Brownstone Ribs & Seafood
Coming Soon: Auntie Anne's Pretzels

Alhambra
CASINO AND SHOPS

Open daily 10am to 3am | J.E. Irausquin Blvd #47 | 583.5000 | casinoalhambra.com

Play Responsibly. Visit www.gamblersanonymous.org if you or someone you know has a gambling problem.



Get it ALL done at Do It Center and Super Do It Center & Groceries



Noord – Sometimes all we need is one place where we can do all our shopping at once. Well, Do it center and Super Do it Center Groceries has it all. This is the largest, local owned Do it Center in the Caribbean and best of all a 100% locally owned family business.

How it all began

It was 1938 when Mr. Eric Ponson started his journey at General Store. Ponson did not hesitate and decided to buy General Store. Buying a store and thus going from employee to owner of a business with a debt of 11.000 guilders was not an easy task.

As the saying goes: "Behind every successful man, is a strong woman". In the case of Ponson, this was no different. As General Store progressed and slowly became successful, Mrs. Irene Ponson, came in to assist her husband. Irene Ponson is a visionary, she knew exactly where and how to invest and within a short amount of time in 1970, General Store moved to a better location at the Steenweg. This allowed for a lot more merchandize, products and employees. Supply and demand was as such, that General Store became the number 1 electrical business. Business kept going so well that the location at the Steenweg became too small and was moved later to Dakota Shopping Paradise and later to Pedro Gallego Straat. With this move, an expansion was decided upon and an electronics store in Savaneta was opened. General Store still being very successful was ready for more growth.

Ricky, Kenneth, Corine and Frans are the fruits of this marriage. Kenneth and Frans however, decided to further develop their father's legacy and continued with their mother's dream

to expand the business. An expansion not in square feet only, but in merchandize as well. A great opportunity presented itself when the Ponson family was able to buy a piece of property across from the airport. In 2007 the Ponson family moved into their brand new and huge building. Ponson's General Store now had an electrical department, a housewares department, a paint department and a hardware department.

After a successful opening and expansion, Kenneth and Frans who inherited their mother's vision, decided that General Store was ready for yet another expansion. With the support of Mr. Tom Barfell and management of Do it Best in the States, the construction of Do it Center commenced.

Fast forward to today. A Do it Center in Aruba, with more than 50.000 top of the line items for interior as well exterior use, building materials, STO products and a top of the line grocery store. Perseverance, responsibility, vision and the courage to invest have made Ponson's General Store as successful as it is today.

Super Do It Center Shaba & Groceries

Located in Shaba, Noord. This is the last sibling of the Do It Center family. Here you will be able to find anything you are looking for. The building is divided into several departments from home to hardware to groceries. Everything under one roof.

Groceries? Visit the fully stocked supermar-

ket with fresh fruits and vegetables and high class meat selections. Highly known products and brands are here for you to grab. Every week Do It Center Groceries offers you great discount on selected items. Weekly specials are very popular and a perfect chance for you to buy your favorite products at a reduced price.

Need a home makeover? Do not skip the furniture department "Leenbakker". Here, you will find a divine collection of European furniture, worldwide known for their modern and stylish features for your bedroom, bathroom, living room or kitchen. For your garden they have a wide selection of durable furniture specially made for our tropical climate. Take a walk around and find some treasures. Find the perfect accessory for your house, fitted for your personality and style. Modern, elegant, retro industrial, whatever your style is you will definitely find something for your personal taste.

Feeling hungry? Take a break and relax at the 'Deli'. Savor a delicious lunch or a sandwich with a cup of coffee or perhaps a wrap. If you are a sweet tooth you will not be able to just skip the great variety of desserts they have. So tempting!

Do it Center Shaba is open from Monday to Saturday from 8AM to 8PM and on Sunday's from 9AM to 6PM.

For more information go to www.doit.aw. □

Do it Center

A well received and successful 18th of March celebration at Convento di Imeldahof and MANA



Noord - A wonderful atmosphere could be felt at Noord and Playa where visitors were very enthusiastic towards the celebrations for our national holiday Dia di Himno y Bandera (National Flag & Hymn Day) dedicated to learning more about the history of Noord, Aruba and the Caribbean.

More than a thousand people enjoyed the expositions Historia di Parokia di Noord (the History of the north's chapel) and Caribbean Ties in the convent Imeldahof. MANA (Museo Arqueologico Nacional Aruba, meaning Aruba's National Museum of Archeology) in Playa received more than 400 visitors.

The character of these monumental buildings in Noord and Playa captured the attention of the public. As well as the beautiful gardens at both locations that made the perfect backdrop and the most enchanting of sceneries. The art work made by Belinda de Veer and Sjoerd Maartens was a revelation to the spectators. The personal guide of Belinda de Veer transmitted how she processed life's challenges in her art. The audiovisual productions and collages of photos of Sjoerd Maartens brought forward the recognition and questions related to the protection and fu-

ture of cultural and natural fortune.

The exposition about Noord's history brought along an opportunity for stories of the nun's of Bethania to be told and to remember the significant parts of her life as a kid in school during the earlier centuries. Caribbean Ties brought information that was once unknown about the relationship between the Caribbean Islands before and after the arrival of colonizers in this region. Tourists were provided with a chance to see this convent in Noord and enjoy of a day of celebration along with our locals.

The collaboration between Fundacion KAPel di Bethania and MANA demonstrated that we can reach much higher goals. The space in de convent Imeldahof will feature many more activities in the coming months where visitors will be able to experience a cultural aspect of Aruba.

The expositions at MANA will be open from Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm. Convent Imeldahof will be open to the public on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9am to 3pm. To have a guide tour visitors can contact the office at MANA by calling +297 5828979. □

Young Aruban winner of \$500 at Alhambra Casino



Ana Flores, a young Aruban currently living in the Netherlands, came to the island on vacation to visit her friends and family. One of the activities she enjoys most while on the island is playing Bingo, and this time she found luck the moment she became a winner!

Ana and her friends have been Bingo players for many years, and ever since she moved to the Netherlands, she takes every opportunity to play Bingo when she is on vacation in Aruba. However, she was never a winner, until last Thursday.

As usual, she went to play Bingo at Alhambra Casino, where the biggest prize of the progressive Bingo, which was more than \$26,000, was not won. However, the last game was for \$500 and here Ana was lucky.

"I couldn't believe it when I saw the last ball that I needed come up! I was so surprised!", she said.

Congratulations! □



Small businesses face tax headaches on top of pandemic woes

By MAE ANDERSON

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) —

Small businesses that have been buffeted by the pandemic, inflation and shipping woes have another challenge to add to their plate: taxes. Tax season can be complicated for everyone, but as the April 18 filing deadline looms, small-business owners, contractors, entrepreneurs and others face a raft of ever-changing rules and regulations.

Plus, many are dealing with delayed returns and refunds from prior tax periods. The Internal Revenue Service has warned of a backlog and says more delays are to be expected. "It's worse this year than last year," said Gene Marks, owner of The Marks Group, a small business consulting firm in Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania. "It seems to get worse every year, and this year definitely worse than it's been in prior years."

The IRS said earlier this month it was hiring 10,000 workers to deal with a backlog of 23 million items triggered by limiting operations during the coronavirus pandemic. But with understaffing at both the fed-

eral and state government levels, CPAs have found it difficult to reach anyone if problems or questions arise. "I've never seen this in my career, they're all understaffed and all behind," said Scott Orn, chief operating officer for the human resources and accounting startup Kruze Consulting. But he urged companies to be patient with the IRS and state-level tax officials. The government programs provided during the pandemic, including the Paycheck Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster Loans, helped countless small businesses.

"So many companies were saved, but that additional administrative burden was really rough on the IRS and state tax agencies," Orn said. "The unintended consequences of good deeds have been tough to handle."

Orn and other tax experts recommend filing for a tax extension this year, like most years.

"We file an extension for every single client, although they should pay estimated taxes throughout the year," Orn said. "It gives us more time to do the tax return prop-



This May 4, 2021 file photo shows the outside of the Internal Revenue Service building in Washington.

Associated Press

erly. You just get way more leeway and there is not as much time pressure."

There are other things to keep in mind too. It's not too late to claim the employee-retention credit. The program, established in 2020 to help businesses during COVID, was subject to changing eligibility rules several times during the pandemic, so not all businesses realized they

qualified. In its final form, the program offered a maximum \$7,000 credit per employee, designed to encourage employers to keep workers on their payroll. The credit ended on Oct. 1, 2021, but businesses can still apply retroactively by filing an amended payroll tax return.

Also, many companies that struggled through 2020 actually had a better year

in 2021 as the economy rebounded. That might affect the estimated tax payments companies pay throughout the year.

So companies should keep an eye on their cash flow and make sure they have enough on hand to make more tax payments, if necessary, to avoid penalties.

"This year, there will be some surprise profitability, with companies ending up with bigger tax bills than they thought," Orn said. "That's actually a good thing. The thing to worry about for small business owners is making sure they have the cash-flow support to estimated tax payments — it could surprise you."

Finally, small businesses should keep in mind any money received via the Paycheck Protection Program or other COVID-related programs does not count toward gross income at the federal level. Unlike other types of loans, PPP loans are tax-exempt whether or not they were forgiven. Businesses may have to report some information about the loan if it was forgiven and if they are deducting related expenses. □

Chip shortage forces GM to pause production at Indiana plant

DETROIT (AP) — General Motors is shutting down its pickup truck factory in Fort Wayne, Indiana, for two weeks next month because the company has run short of computer chips.

The auto industry continues to face supply chain issues more than a year after a global chip shortage first emerged in late 2020.

Chip supplies have improved during the first three months of this year compared with 2021, GM said, improving production and deliveries in the first quarter. But there's still uncertainty in getting supplies from chip manufacturers.

The Fort Wayne plant will be closed the weeks of April 4 and 11. It has been running on three shifts per day making Chevrolet Silverados and GMC Sierra light duty pickups. The plant employs

more than 4,000 blue collar workers.

"There is still uncertainty and unpredictability in the semiconductor supply base, and we are actively working with our suppliers to mitigate potential issues moving forward," GM said Friday.

All of GM's North American assembly plants have been running on at least one shift since Nov. 1 of last year, the company said. Throughout the chip shortage, GM has sent most of the semiconductors it gets to pickup truck and large SUV factories. Those are the company's most profitable vehicles.

Earlier this week, GM President Mark Reuss said he's confident the company can manage its way through supply chain difficulties including chips and

possible shortages of rare earth metals brought on by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

"We're not a new automaker. We've got lots of volume, lots of partnerships. We've got over 20,000 suppliers, \$88 billion of material that we run through that chain to make our cars, trucks and crossovers," he said. "We're not new to this game. We work on it every day, and it's never over."

The roots of the computer chip shortage bedeviling auto and other industries stem from the eruption of the pandemic in early 2020. U.S. automakers had to shut factories to help stop the virus from spreading and some parts companies canceled orders for semiconductors.

At the same time, with tens of millions of people



This Jan. 27, 2020 photo shows the General Motors logo.

Associated Press

hunkered down at home, demand for laptops, tablets and gaming consoles, technology heavily reliant on computer chips, skyrocketed.

And though auto factories were closing, demand for vehicles remained surprisingly strong. When auto

makers did begin to open their factories, they found that chip makers had shifted production to other electronic goods being bought in vast quantities by people sheltering at home, creating a shortage of weather-resistant automotive-grade chips. □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 39 Cartoonist

1 Accident Thomas

7 Civil rights legend
40 Parade site
Parks

11 Take a breath
DOWN 1 View

12 Golf club obscurers

13 Worried 2 Prologue

14 Warble 3 Like

15 Arduous chiffon

16 "Love native

Story" 5 Brighton

writer brews

17 Ticked 6 Walker,

off on a sign

18 Sea rover 7 Step

19 Tale part

21 Ruin 8 Folding

22 Montréal craft

native 9 Beethoven

25 Tooth sur- works

rounder 24 Satellite

26 Manipula- 36 Urgent

tive one

27 Trans- 37 "Got it"

plants, as 38 Anxious

plants

29 Honcho

33 Long

stories

34 Screen

dot

35 Toad

feature

36 Mocking

work

37 "Got it"

38 Anxious

B	E	L	L	S	D	O	S	E	S
E	M	A	I	L	I	R	E	N	E
L	I	N	D	A	T	E	R	S	E
I	N	C	P	E	T	G	U	M	
Z	E	E	P	A	Y	E	E	L	
E	M	C	E	E	S	L	A	D	Y
		O	R	D	E	R	I	N	
G	A	R	R	S	E	T	T	L	E
U	M	P	S	U	V	M	O	S	
F	O	O	A	P	E	A	C	T	
F	E	R	A	L	R	A	J	A	H
A	B	A	S	E	E	M	O	T	E
W	A	L	K	S	D	I	R	E	R

Yesterday's answer

10 One with 25 Appeared,

a line as baby

16 Following teeth

18 Printer's 28 Quartet

need doubled

20 Neigh- 30 Rust, for

bors one

22 "What's 31 Suit fabric

up?" in 32 Winter

Juarez weather

23 Diamond 34 Gasp for

experts air

24 Satellite

1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9	10
11							12			
13							14			
15							16			
17							18			
			19	20				21		
	22	23					24			
25				26						
27			28				29	30	31	32
33							34			
35							36			
37							38			
39							40			

3-26

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three I's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

3-26 CRYPTOQUOTE

DZ KPTSRH CRR IIT DPCM. NJ

MPZ RTIF YSJ. FNUZK SK BTX.

ZUZI NA NM NK TJRX INQENJE

FYCIZK TY KTYMNJE MPZ

RCSJHYX. — Z.V. DPNMZ

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: THOSE WHO BRING SUNSHINE INTO THE LIVES OF OTHERS CANNOT KEEP IT FROM THEMSELVES. — J.M. BARRIE

Opening day: CNN+ streaming service ready for launch Tuesday



This undated image released by CNN+ shows Audie Cornish, weekly interview show "20 Questions" in May, on the new streaming service.

Associated Press

By DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) — Once a familiar voice on NPR, Audie Cornish says she signed on to the new CNN+ streaming service in part out of the sense she was helping to open a new frontier.

After much talk, nearly \$100 million in development costs and some 500 employees assigned to the task — many, like Cornish, new hires — CNN+ is set to launch next Tuesday.

The company on Thursday revealed a typical day's schedule, with a news countdown hosted by Kate Bolduan, a deep-dive news hour hosted by Sara Sidner, a Chris Wallace interview show, and hours on politics, international news and the media topped by Wolf Blitzer's evening newscast.

"It's so rare to have a legacy news organization pour resources into something like this, at this scale," said Cornish, whose weekly interview show "20 Questions" will debut in May. "A lot of times people say they will pivot into something, and it can be half-hearted. I really appreciated that they were going all-in."

She said that it's "rare that

anyone says come and do what you do for us. It's usually, 'come and do what we need.'"

CNN+ is a big swing, done at a tumultuous time in the company's leadership, and there's no shortage of skepticism in the industry about its chances. But CNN views streaming as the future, a way to engage younger consumers, and sees The New York Times as the model for a successful news subscription service.

It will cost \$5.99 a month, but charter subscribers can lock in a \$2.99 monthly charge in perpetuity if they act within a month of the launch.

"We think it will be incredibly attractive to the CNN fan, people who respond to our journalism, people who tune to us when there's something going on in the world," said Andrew Morse, executive vice president and chief digital officer at CNN. "At its heart, CNN+ will be about great journalism and story-telling."

While news is the core, and CNN+ will have the ability to go live on big stories, the service is also relying on a growing library of original series and films,

such as "Anthony Bourdain: Parts Unknown" and "RBG." CNN+ will also emphasize programs featuring people who have a specific, devoted following, like Alison Roman in cooking, Scott Galloway in business and Jemele Hill and Rex Chapman in sports and culture. CNN's Anderson Cooper will have a show on parenting, and Jake Tapper, a seven-time author himself, will have a program focusing on books.

Two online series will be available at launch: "The Murdochs: Empire of Influence," about media mogul Rupert Murdoch, and "The Land of the Giants: Titans of Tech," profiles of the biggest high-tech firms. Also planned is an interactive element where subscribers can put questions directly to show hosts.

News competitors are already in the paid streaming space. Fox Nation, another paid subscription service, is designed to appeal to those who like Fox's opinion programming. MSNBC recently announced that it will make many of its programs available through Peacock.

The ABC, CBS and NBC broadcast news divisions offer news streaming products for free.

One analyst said CNN+ may receive a boost because the war in Ukraine is reminding many consumers of the company's news muscles. CNN+ will be attractive to consumers who are cutting the cable cord but don't want to lose access to news and information, said Alan Wolk, co-founder of TVREV, a media analysis firm.

With questions about the future of cable news given its older audiences, CNN+ is the latest big step in the news industry's seemingly endless quest to reach more young people, he said.

Stephen Beck, managing partner of the consulting firm cg42, said he's concerned that CNN+ will be caught in a consumer squeeze. □

Honey Dolls
MASSAGE AND ESCORT SERVICE

Beautiful Latin Girls
Pick-up & Delivery

Serving Men - Couple - Women - All Genders

+297 565-9535

WWW.PLEASUREINARUBA.COM

24/7

Scientists figure out how vampire bats got a taste for blood



This photo provided by Sherri and Brock Fenton/AAAS in March 2022 shows a vampire bat in flight. Associated Press

By CHRISTINA LARSON

WASHINGTON (AP) — Scientists have figured out why vampire bats are the only mammals that can survive on a diet of just blood. They compared the genome of common vampire bats to 26 other bat species and identified 13 genes that are missing or no longer work in vampire bats. Over the years, those gene tweaks helped them adapt to a blood diet rich in iron and protein but with minimal fats or carbohydrates, the researchers reported Friday in the journal *Science Advances*.

The bats live in South and Central America and are basically "living Draculas," said co-author Michael Hiller of Germany's Max Planck Institute. About 3 inches (8 centimeters) long with a wingspan of 7 inches (18 centimeters), the bats bite and then lap up blood from livestock or other animals at night.

Most mammals couldn't survive on a low-calorie liquid diet of blood. Only three vampire species of the 1,400 kinds of bats can do that — the others eat mostly insects, fruit, nectar, pollen or meat, such as

small frogs and fish.

"Blood is a terrible food source," said Hannah Kim Frank, a bat researcher at Tulane University, who was not involved in the study. "It's totally bizarre and amazing that vampire bats can survive on blood — they are really weird, even among bats."

Some other creatures also have a taste for blood, including mosquitoes, bedbugs, leeches and fleas. The latest work expands upon research by another

team that pinpointed three of the 13 gene losses.

"The new paper shows how different vampire bats are from even other closely related bats, which eat nectar and fruit," said Kate Langwig, a bat researcher at Virginia Tech, who had no role in the study.

With such a low-calorie diet, vampire bats can't go long without a meal. In a pinch, well-fed ones will regurgitate their food to share with a starving neighbor. They seem to keep

track of who has helped them in the past, said Hiller, noting that vampire bats have complex social relationships.

"It's not a kin thing," said Tulane's Frank. "They just notice and remember: You're a good sharer, I will reward you." □

For Sale by Owner Eagle Aruba Resort & Casino

Weeks 2,3,4
Two Bedroom Suite
Unit #3508
\$12,950.00 per wk
Contact
sales.aruba@hotmail.com

215098

For Sale by Owner Caribbean Palm Village Resort

Wk 50-2BR/28th, \$1,900
Wks 51&52-2BR/28th, \$2,900
Wks 51&52-1BR/2Bth, \$1,900
Wk 52-1BR/2Bth, \$2,500
Wk 11-2BR/2Bth, \$1,900
Wk 12-1 BR/2Bth, \$1,200
Wk 13-2 BR/2Bth, \$1,300
Contact:
sales.aruba@hotmail.com

215061



Editor

Caribbean Speed Printers N.V.
Aruba Bank N.V. Acc. #332668
Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V.
Acc. #23951903
RBC Royal Bank Acc. #1330772

Assistant Director

Xiomara Arends

Editors

Pilar Flores

Liza Koolman (Management assistant)

Richard Brooks

Sales

Liza Koolman
Sulaika Croes

Classifieds

classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection

accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website

Juan Luis Pinto

Columnists

Anthony Croes

Weststraat 22
T: 582-7800

E: news@arubatoday.com
W: www.arubatoday.com

@arubatoday



HEALTH

DOCTOR ON DUTY

Oranjestad

Hospital 7:00 pm / 10:00pm
Tel. 527 4000

San Nicolas

Imsan 24 hours
Tel. 524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad:

Central Tel. 585 1965

San Nicolas:

Seroe Preto Tel. 584 4833

OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850
Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic
+297 588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police	100
Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

Aruba Airport	524 2424
American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

AID FOUNDATIONS

FAVI- Visually Impaired
Tel. 582 5051

Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952

Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989

Fundacion Contra Violencia
Relacional Tel. 583 5400

Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888

Child Abuse Prevention
Tel. 582 4433

Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

General Info

Phone Directory Tel. 118



facebook.com/arubatoday/

Sweet 16: Coach K says 'It's not the coaching.' But it is

By **JIM LITKE**
 AP Sports Columnist

Duke keeps winning games in the NCAA Tournament and Mike Krzyzewski keeps telling anyone who will listen, "It's not the coaching." There's some evidence to suggest he's right.

For one thing, Duke relies almost entirely on freshmen and sophomores, which means his core group of players have only had so much time to soak up Coach K's decades of gathered wisdom. For another, Krzyzewski switched to a zone defense in the second half of Thursday night's Sweet 16 game against a rugged Texas Tech team, but when the Blue Devils needed big stops down the stretch his players lobbied — successfully — to go back to man-to-man.

Finally, and most important, perhaps, those same kids who are supposed to be feeling the pressure of his impending retirement shot 71% from the floor after halftime, hitting eight straight field goals to end the game. There's no coaching manual that covers that.

But don't be fooled.

On the same night two No. 1 seeds were toppled, the reason Krzyzewski won the 100th NCAA Tournament game of his career and remains squarely on track toward a sixth national championship is ... coaching. No one does it better. He's been recruiting kids who ooze with NBA-caliber talent for four decades now — which is a specialty all its own — and then teaching them the difference between showing up and showing off when the game is on the line. Duke had played zone defense roughly 5% of the time during the regular season, which made it a risky gam-



Duke head coach Mike Krzyzewski celebrates after his team defeated Texas Tech in a college basketball game in the Sweet 16 round of the NCAA tournament in San Francisco, Thursday, March 24, 2022.

bit when Coach K threw the switch against the Red Raiders. Then he listened to his players when they pleaded to switch back, which is even riskier, and more to the point, it proved that at age 75, the old Blue Devil is still willing to learn new tricks.

"Whenever they can own something, they're going to do it better than if we just run it," Krzyzewski said afterward. "When they said that, I felt they're going to own it. They'll make it work, and that's probably more important than strategy during that time. So that's the way I looked at it."

Three key defensive stops that followed and two late baskets by Jeremy Roach moved Krzyzewski within one win of his record-set-

ting 13th trip to the Final Four with a 78-73 victory. Paolo Banchero led second-seeded Duke with 22 points, Mark Williams scored 16 and Roach, handed his starting spot back just ahead of the tournament, added 15.

Bryson Williams led No. 3 seed Texas Tech with 21. Duke will play Arkansas on Saturday with a trip to the Final Four on the line. That's after the fourth-seeded Razorbacks, who bear some resemblance to the "40 Minutes of Hell" Arkansas teams that tore up the tournament in the mid-1990s, tore up top overall seed Gonzaga en route to a 74-68 win.

Much like those teams, coach Eric Musselman has loaded up tenacious de-

fenders and shooters with short memories — notably JD Notae, who missed 20 shots and still scored 21 points — and has the Razorbacks convinced it's them against the world.

"We've been disrespected the whole year, so it's just another thing for us," Jaylin Williams said. "We saw everything they were saying, we felt like they were dancing before the game. ...

"We had a chip on our shoulder," he added a moment later. "Every game we do."

Whatever the Zags had on their shoulders felt like a 40-pound weight. Entering as the top-scoring team in the nation (87.8 points per game), Gonzaga shot 37.5% and went 5 of 21 from 3-point range. NBA prospect Chet Holmgren, the Zags' skinny freshman center, was hounded all night and spared himself a few minutes of hell by fouling out with 3:29 left.

Speaking of discomfort, fifth-seeded Houston did a pretty good job of exploiting top seed Arizona's lack

of experience. The Wildcats missed seven of their first eight shots as Houston sprinted to a 14-4 advantage and led the rest of the way, riding 21 points from Jamal Shead and 19 from Kyler Edwards to a 72-60 win.

"I knew we were going to make them uncomfortable, that's what we do," Cougars coach Kelvin Sampson said. "Our team, we're a tough bunch. ... They're not afraid of anybody."

Houston lost four starters from last season and then lost Marcus Sasser, the lone returner and leading scorer who broke his left foot before Christmas. And then Taze Moore, one of the transfers Sampson relied on, got hit with his third personal foul against Arizona with 9:22 left and wound up playing only 17 minutes overall.

"Tonight, you know, he was in the witness protection program," Sampson said. "I couldn't find him. Nowhere. We put him in there, we had to take him right back out."

That won't do against second-seeded Villanova, where coach Jay Wright has been quietly fashioning a mini-dynasty of his own. The Wildcats don't play the "no-respect" card because they win too much — two national championships since 2016 — and they put together another workmanlike performance to send No. 11 seed Michigan packing with a 63-55 victory. Jermaine Samuels, a freshman during that last title run in 2018 — capped off against Michigan, no less — led Villanova with 22 points, and drew the unenviable assignment of battling 7-foot-1 Hunter Dickinson on both ends of the floor. Dickinson led Michigan with 15 points and 15 rebounds, but none of them came easy.

"I just wanted to stay mobile and move," Samuels said. "He's a phenomenal player, so he's going to get great looks at the basket. But that I have teammates behind me gave me all the confidence I needed." □



LIKE US ON
facebook
[Facebook.com/arubatoday/](https://www.facebook.com/arubatoday/)

Gauff and Rogers win, more seeded women fall at Miami Open

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (AP)

— Seeded women continue to have major struggles at the Miami Open.

Coco Gauff is one of the few exceptions.

The 14th-seeded American, whose home is about a 45-minute drive north from where she's playing this event, got past Wang Qiang of China 7-5, 6-4 on Friday — avenging a first-round loss to her in the Australian Open earlier this year.

"I think I hit a lot of good shots on the run," Gauff said.

Gauff, who turned 18 earlier this month, made her WTA Tour debut three years ago at the Miami Open. She reached the second round that year, was ousted in the second round last year and now is in the third round at Miami for the first time.

"I was just super motivated today," Gauff said.

No. 16 Jessica Pegula felt right at home too, even though the tournament is held on the grounds where the NFL's Miami Dolphins practice and play — and her parents, Terry and Kim Pegula, just happen to own the Dolphins' AFC East rival Buffalo Bills. Pegula had little trouble beating 2018 Miami Open winner Sloane Stephens 6-1, 6-4.

More than half of the wom-



Coco Gauff returns a shot from Wang Qiang of China, during the Miami Open tennis tournament, Friday, March 25, 2022, in Miami Gardens, Fla.

Associated Press

en who were seeded going into the tournament won't even be around for the first weekend, with four more — No. 10 Jelena Ostapenko of Latvia, No. 20 Elise Mertens of Belgium, No. 24 Sorana Cirstea of Romania, and No. 29 Liudmila Samsonova of Russia — getting eliminated in second-round matches Friday.

Their losses meant 15 seeded women have now lost their opening matches at the tournament, with 11 — including top-seeded Aryna Sabalenka — getting defeated Thursday alone.

Another four seeded women have withdrawn with either injuries or ailments, meaning no more than 13 of the original 32 seeds will get to the third round.

Shelby Rogers of the U.S. used 15 aces — and saved nine of the 10 break points she faced — to beat Ostapenko, 6-3, 7-6 (0). It was Rogers' second win over Ostapenko this month, after also topping her in a second-round matchup at Indian Wells.

"There are no easy matches out here," said Rogers, who has now made the third

round at Miami for just the second time; she also did it in 2017. "Whether you play the same people week to week or not, you've still got to go out there and perform. I just tried to focus on my side of the court and did the best I could."

Madison Brengle of the U.S. beat Samsonova 6-4, 6-0. China's Zhang Shuai needed only 53 minutes to beat Cirstea, 6-1, 6-1. Linda Fruhvirtova of the Czech Republic topped Mertens 7-5, 2-6, 6-1.

Other seeded second-round women's winners Fri-

day included No. 17 Elena Rybakina and No. 21 Veronika Kudermetova.

Later Friday, No. 2 seed Iga Swiatek of Poland can clinch the world's No. 1 ranking if she defeats Viktorija Golubic of Switzerland in a second-round match. It's Swiatek's first match of the tournament; she, like all seeds, got a bye into the second round.

Swiatek would be assured of moving into the No. 1 spot because Ashleigh Barty, who had held the top spot until her retirement announcement earlier this week, has asked to be removed from the next set of rankings.

The updated list will come out after the Miami Open concludes.

"We're going to definitely miss Ash on tour," Gauff said.

In men's second-round play Friday, No. 10 Cameron Norrie improved to 12-2 in his past 14 outings by beating fellow British player Jack Draper in straight sets. No. 17 Pablo Carreno Busta and No. 31 Fabio Fognini also prevailed.

Hugo Gaston knocked out No. 20 John Isner of the U.S., topping the 2018 Miami champion 7-6 (5), 6-4. Isner had 22 aces and was broken just once, but went 0 for 5 on his break chances. □

AP source: Bills get initial OK for NFL \$200M stadium loan

By JOHN WAWROW

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — The Buffalo Bills moved closer to landing \$200 million in NFL funding to help finance their bid to build a new stadium in which a majority of the projected \$1.354 billion price tag is anticipated to be covered by taxpayer dollars.

A person with direct knowledge of the decision told The Associated Press on Friday that the NFL's stadium and finance committee backed the Bills' request for what's called a G4 loan, by recommending the team's application be presented at the league's owner meetings for final approval. The person spoke on the

condition of anonymity because the decision was made privately.

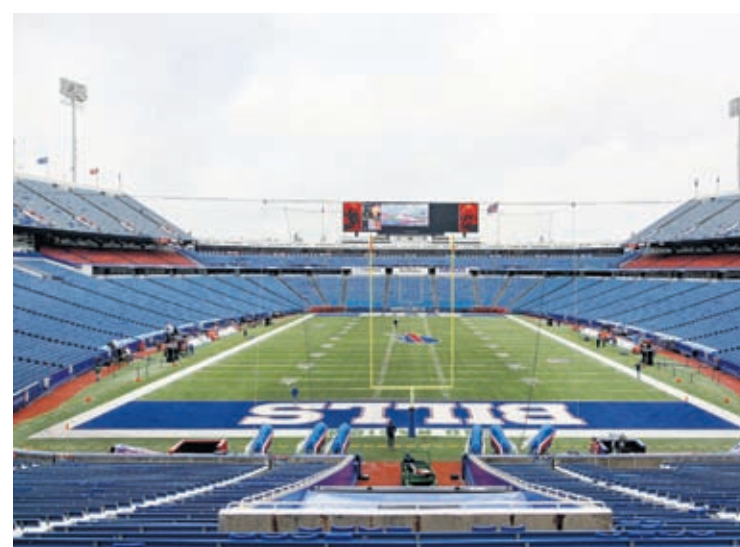
The committee's approval was anticipated, and it will require 24 of the NFL's 32 owners to formally OK the loan during a vote scheduled to take place on Monday.

Under the G4 program rules, Bills owners Terry and Kim Pegula would be required to put up matching dollars which would increase the private funding to at least \$400 million for the new stadium.

The committee's backing opens a critical week for the proposed project with New York Gov. Kathy Hochul facing a deadline

to have an agreement in place in time to include the state's share of funding in her budget, which by law must be approved on April 1. Hochul previously expressed confidence in reaching a deal with the Bills before the deadline. Even though she submitted a \$216 billion budget in January, Hochul said there are numerous options at her disposal to draw upon the necessary money to fund the project.

While the parties, which include Erie County, have been closing in on an agreement over the past month, what's unclear is how much public money will be required to secure



The field is prepared at Highmark Stadium before an NFL football game between the Buffalo Bills and the Carolina Panthers, Dec. 19, 2021, in Orchard Park, N.Y.

Associated Press

the long-term future for the small-market Bills, who are

the NFL's lone team based in New York. □

SUPER Do it Center

Bo Famia Pa Semper!

HOT
ITEMS

OFFER VALID FROM 25 MARCH - 31 MARCH 2022 AND WHILE SUPPLIES LAST.

Weekly SPECIALS

Weekly SPECIALS



SAVE
\$1.72

BBQ/Grill Skewer Picanha

\$19.99

Per KG



SAVE
\$0.40

Roasted Rosemary Ham

\$1.82

100 GR



SAVE
\$1.14

Cucumber European Seedless

\$1.14

Each



SAVE
\$1.49

Almond Breeze Unsweet Original Milk 32oz

\$2.28

Each



SAVE
\$2.23

U.S. Boneless
Porkloin

\$5.71

Per KG



SAVE
\$1.72

Chicken
Legs

\$2.57

Per KG



SAVE
\$1.66

U.S. Pork Cutlet
Zigeuner Breaded

\$7.99

Per KG



SAVE
\$1.66

Tenderloin
Brasil

\$17.71

Per KG



SAVE
\$5.66

Lamb Loin Boneless
Skin-Off

\$45.71

Per KG



SAVE
\$1.71

Oranges Navel
8lbs

\$9.71

Per Bag



\$1.71

Cabbage Green

Per KG



\$1.02

Corn Yellow

Each



\$0.91

Onions Green Scallion

Each



SAVE
\$0.57

Belgioioso Crumbly
Gorgonzola Wedge 5oz

\$3.82

Each



SAVE
\$0.34

Latino Frying Cheese

\$1.08

100 GR



SAVE
\$0.34

Provolone Cheese

\$1.13

100 GR



SAVE
\$0.29

Mortadella W/Pistachio

\$1.37

100 GR



SAVE
\$0.29

Imitation Crab Meat Stick Surimi 1lb

\$2.97

Each



SAVE
\$0.34

Doux Chicken Franks Assorted 340gr

\$1.25

Each



\$2.74

Toufayan Blueberry
Bagels 20oz



SAVE
\$0.17

\$0.85

Frikandelbroodje



SAVE
\$0.15

\$1.65

Alberto Beans Large
Kidney 12oz



SAVE
\$0.41

\$1.71

Remia Garlic Sauce/
Shoarma Sauce 250ml



SAVE
\$1.14

\$5.14

Nabisco Oreo Chocolate
Cookies 14.3oz



SAVE
\$0.74

\$4.39

Gts Enlightened Synergy
16fz